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FM AMEMBASSY DILI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2555
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0428
RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
RUEHXX/GENEVA IO MISSIONS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0486
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0412
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0266
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0280
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0351
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0152
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI 1876

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DILI 000252

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DEPT FOR EAP/MTS; USPACOM FOR JOC AND POLAD; JOINT STAFF FOR J5

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/24/2016
TAGS: ASEC PGOV MARR PHUM CACS TT
SUBJECT: EAST TIMOR SITREP #1 FOR MAY 24, 2006

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CLASSIFIED BY: Sean Stein, Charge de Affairs, Embassy Dili,
State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (U) Summary.

- EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT OF COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN FDTL AND DISSIDENTS
 - FDTL ACTIVITIES
 - OTHER VIOLENCE IN DILI
 - AIR TRAFFIC ISSUES
 - DISIDENT MILITARY GROUPS
 - OTHER POLICE ISSUES
 - IDP CAMPS OVERCROWDED
 - AMCIT PHOTO JOURNALIST COMES UNDER FIRE IN TASITOLU
 - AMCIT NURSE REMAINS IN TIBAR AREA
 - WARDEN UPDATE
- End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) A highly credible Embassy source provided a description of the outbreak of hostilities between the FDTL and the dissident military police led by Major Reinado. The source was on the scene at the time, assisting an Australian journalist interview Reinado. He provided the following description of the events:

- Shortly after the media interview was over, several regular FDTL appeared and approached Reinado and his men;
- Reinado warned them to turn back, stating that he had no issue with the regular FDTL, only with Colonel Lere;
- When the soldiers continued to approach, Reinado's men were ordered to fire on them.

FDTL ACTIVITIES

¶3. (SBU) Combat operations have reportedly ceased in the Fatuahi area to the southeast of Dili, but new clashes, this time between the FDTL and dissident police and civilians, have broken out to the west of Dili, a few kilometers past the airport. FDTL

has established a roadblock on the main intersection to the south of the airport. (Note: this does not disrupt traffic between Dili and the airport.) There are credible reports of FDTL patrols in Dili disarming police throughout the capital. Reports indicate that the FDTL may be preparing to resume patrols in order to secure the city. FDTL has deployed a .50 caliber machine gun -- the largest weapon in the FDTL arsenal, to Tasitolu.

OTHER VIOLENCE IN DILI

¶4. (U) There are several reports of clashes between civilian groups in Dili in both the Comoro and Becora areas. Gunshots have been heard in various places around Dili.

AIR TRAFFIC ISSUES

¶5. (SBU) According to USDR, sporadic gunfire and conflict in the Tibar and Tasitolu area could pose a threat to aircraft using the Comoro airport.

DISIDENT MILITARY GROUPS

¶6. (C) Major Reinado: According to FDTL reports, Maj. Reinado has been given refuge by a detachment from the Police Reserve Unit (PRU) in Aileu. The PRU is a special paramilitary arm of the police equipped with side arms and assault rifles.

¶7. (C) Majors Tilman and Tara and the Petitioners: At the request of the Government, the Embassy has maintained contact with Tilman and Tara and with Salsinha to encourage them to keep their followers under control, refrain from undertaking any provocative activities, and reject the use of violence. As of yesterday evening, all three men stated that they and their followers are committed to dialogue and that they will not use violence except in self-defense or if the FDTL begins to conduct operations in their area. That commitment may have broken down as Maj. Tilman is now reportedly leading the group fighting in

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Tibar and Tasitolu.

OTHER POLICE ISSUES

¶8. (SBU) The atmosphere at National Police Headquarters is reportedly very tense. Guards have been posted around the perimeter and on the roof, ostensibly to provide general security, but actually to deter FDTL units from entering the compound. Early indications today confirm yesterday's reporting that the National Police Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR) - the unit charged with responding to civil disturbances - has virtually ceased to exist as an organized unit.

IDP CAMPS OVERCROWDED

¶9. (SBU) Dili's IDP camps have become overcrowded as families have fled from the Becora and Tasitolu suburbs. One IDP camp in Becora has been evacuated and the IDPs relocated to a camp in central Dili. Youth have also attempted to enter one of the largest IDP camps with concealed weapons, but were expelled by security guards. The World Health Organization has been asked to do a rapid assessment of the health and sanitation situation in the camps as recent torrential rains may lead to a health crisis.

AMCIT PHOTO JOURNALIST COMES UNDER FIRE IN TASITOLU

¶10. (SBU) At around 1015 this morning, Poloff was contacted by an American photo journalist who had entered the Tasitolu area to cover ongoing clashes there. The Amcit reported that his vehicle was hit by gunfire near FDTL headquarters and that he had been pinned down by continued shooting. Amcit requested Embassy assistance to convey him to safety. This proved unnecessary as the Australian military representatives was nearby and was able to assist. The Amcit he is now safe and does not know the identity of the shooters.

AMCIT NURSE REMAINS IN TIBAR AREA

¶11. (SBU) Poloff was also contacted around 2300 last night by an Amcit nurse who lives in the Tibar area. She reported that the mob that Charge had seen earlier (see May 23 Sitrep cable) had grown and was becoming more beligerant. Police had come to the clinic compound to warn them to evacuate as they expected the situation to deteriorate and that the compound may be targeted because some patients and staff are easterners. Embassy offered to arrange to evacuate her to Dili, but she declined. She and her colleagues have opted to remain in place, secure the compound as much as possible and try to maintain a very low profile. The Embassy remains in contact with her.

WARDEN UPDATE

¶12. (SBU) The Embassy has sent an SMS warden message this morning advising US Citizens to avoid all areas where violence has been reported and to avoid non-essential movements. The State Department's revised Travel Warning has been sent via email to the American community. STEIN